

DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife announces hunters harvested 564 wild turkeys during 2019 season

Turkey hunter Kimberly Pokoiski with a gobbler taken at the Division of Fish & Wildlife's Midlands Wildlife Area. The photo, titled "My Pride and Joy," was taken by Paul Skibicki of St. Georges and won an honorable mention award in the 2018/19 Delaware hunting photo contest

DOVER – Delaware's month-long spring wild turkey hunting season, which ended May 11, yielded a harvest of 564 birds, slightly lower than last year's harvest of 571 birds, DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife announced today. Toms (males at least two years of age) accounted for 439 of the harvested birds this year, representing 78 percent of the total harvest.

Harvests during this year's turkey season weekly segments were 254 the first week, 120 the second week, 72 the third week, and 99 the fourth week. This year's total harvest also included 19 birds harvested by youth hunters during the special youth/non-ambulatory disabled hunt day on April 6.

Only turkeys with beards – almost always males – can be harvested in Delaware. Highlights of the 2019 season included the harvest of 29 "non-typical" turkeys, consisting of gobblers with more than one beard. Of these birds, 23 had two beards, five had three beards, and one had four beards. The longest-bearded bird had a 14-inch beard. The longest spurs on a harvested bird were 1-5/8" on the right leg and 1-13/16" on the left leg. The heaviest bird harvested weighed 26 lbs., 2 oz., and was taken in southwest Kent County.

Turkeys were harvested in 17 of 18 wildlife management zones.

A hot spot for harvest occurred in six zones stretching from zones 4, 6, 7, and 8 in western Kent County through zones 11 and 12 between Seaford and Lewes in Sussex County, accounting for just over half of the total statewide harvest. Zone 1A, which is in New Castle County north of I-95/295, was the only zone where no birds were harvested.

This year, 86 percent of the turkeys were harvested on privately-owned lands. Hunters also were successful on public lands where 81 birds were bagged, with turkeys being harvested from 20 different public lands statewide.

For hunters planning ahead, the 2020 wild turkey season will start Saturday, April 11 and run through Saturday, May 9, with the special youth and non-ambulatory disabled hunter day set for Saturday, April 4. The turkey lottery application to hunt on Division of Fish & Wildlife public wildlife areas can be found in the 2019/2020 hunting guide. Hunters are required to successfully complete an approved turkey hunter education class before hunting wild turkeys in Delaware.

For more information on hunting, click [2019-2020 Delaware Hunting & Trapping Guide](#) and [Wildlife Area Hunting Maps](#). Hard copies of the guide and hunting maps are also available at the license desk in DNREC's Dover office.

For more information, please call the DNREC Division of Fish & Wildlife's Wildlife Section at 302-739-9912 or visit www.fw.delaware.gov.

Follow the Division of Fish & Wildlife on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/DelawareFishWildlife>.

Media contact: Joanna Wilson, DNREC Public Affairs, 302-739-9902.

Vol. 49, No. 176

-End-